



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221
Telephone: (804) 367-2323 Fax: (804) 367-2391

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

HISTORIC DISTRICT

An historic district is defined as a significant concentration of buildings, structures, or sites that are united historically and aesthetically by plan or physical development. The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of eligibility for the nomination potential of a historic district for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does **not** mean that the district is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather, it is being evaluated to determine if it qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the staff's and the State Review Board's recommendations.

Contact the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archivist to determine if previous survey material for this proposed district is on file, and if the district has been previously evaluated by DHR. Obtaining previously recorded information could save a significant amount of time in preparing this Preliminary Information Form (PIF). The archivist may be reached by phone at (804) 482-6102, or by email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov. The archivist will also give you the address of the regional office to which you should send your completed PIF materials.

Please type this form and, if additional space is needed, use 8½" x 11" paper. If an electronic version of this PIF is available, it would be helpful if it could be submitted on a disc, or via email to the archivist. Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and will not be returned.

Photographs: Please provide at least four (4) **color or** black-and-white (B&W) photographs of general streetscapes and four (4) color or B&W photographs showing a sample of individual buildings within the proposed district. The inclusion of photographs is essential to the completion of this application. **Without photographs, the application cannot be evaluated.** Photographs should be labeled on the reverse side in soft pencil or china marker (not with adhesive labels), and are not to be mounted or affixed in any way.

Digital Images: In addition to the images printed on photographic paper, digital images, if available, should be submitted in TIF or JPEG format and can be included on the same disc as the PIF.

Maps: Please include two (2) maps showing the location of the proposed district:

- A copy of a USGS Quad map with name of county/city printed on the map and with the name of the proposed district indicating its location (sections of USGS Quadrangle maps can be printed free of charge from <http://store.usgs.gov> and hand-labeled to mark property boundaries or location), and
- A map showing a closer picture of the proposed boundaries with street names and/or routes and possible building footprints would also be helpful. Please include a "North" arrow, date, and "Not to Scale" on this map.

Before submitting this form, please make sure that you have included the following:

- Section of labeled USGS Quadrangle map
- Proposed district boundary map
- 4 labeled color or B&W general photos
- 4 labeled color or B&W individual building photos
- Completed Resource Information Sheet, including
 - Applicant contact information and signature
 - City or county official's contact information

Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form. Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the proposed district for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the district could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information		For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 122-5797	
District Name(s):	Auto Row Historic District		
District or Selected Building Date(s):	1907-1964 (6?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post	Open to the Public? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Main District Streets and/or Routes:	Monticello Ave, Granby St, Brambleton Ave, Boush St, Olney Rd, W Virginia Beach Blvd, Wilson Ave, E 14th St		
City:	Norfolk		Zip: 23510
County or Ind. City:	Norfolk USGS Quad(s): VA_Norfolk_South		

Physical Character of General Surroundings

Acreage: 54 Setting (choose one): ☒ City ☐ Urban ☐ Town ☐ Suburban ☐ Rural ☐ Transportation Corridor

Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes:

The district is bounded to the south by Brambleton Avenue and the Downtown Norfolk Historic District. To the east by St. Paul's Blvd, Monticello Avenue and the Young Terrace Public Housing neighborhood. To the north by 14th Street and to the west by Boush Street. The district is a mixture of retail, office, warehouses, parking lots, and a few large resources such as the former Golden Triangle Hotel, the Harrison Opera House and the headquarters of the Virginian-Pilot newspaper and the WTKR television station. There is minimal vegetation in the district other than limited landscaping for some newer construction and rare patches of grass. There are sidewalks and vacant lots from demolished buildings are used for a mixture of parking and modern infill.

Ownership Categories: ☒ Private ☐ Public-Local ☐ Public-State ☐ Public-Federal

General District Information

What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc...

Office, Financial institution, Restaurant, Warehouse, Fire station, Auto showroom/service, Dairy, Dwelling, Auditorium, Electric supply, Light industrial, Hotel, Bus station, Communications facility, TV station, Newspaper facility

What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use) Department store, Professional offices, Meeting hall, Parking lot, Clinic

Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district: Commercial Style; Moderne; International; Art Deco

Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district: Peebles & Ferguson; Neff & Thompson; Ferguson, Calrow & Wrenn; Anthony F. Musolino; Morris Lapidus; Clarence W. Meakin; Frederick A. Roethke (owner); Herbert Woodley Simpson; Benjamin F. Mitchell; John Arch Simpson; Mitchell & Wilcox; Edward M. Jordan

General Description of District: (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.)

The Granby Street Auto Row Historic District is located in a flat area directly north of the Downtown Norfolk Historic District (#122-0265) with Brambleton Avenue dividing them. The area consists of entirely commercial, mostly one-to-two story buildings with a handful of three and four story buildings. The area was developed in the nineteenth century largely as an area for poor and middle class housing. With denser, high rise development emerging in downtown, business owners, particularly automobile sales and service companies, expanded north where there was access to larger lots to build showrooms and warehouses. By the early-to-mid twentieth century all of the dwellings had been demolished, or altered beyond recognition, in favor of this new commercial development.

The district is comprised of 54 acres with the district being wide at its southern end while narrowing to a one block corridor at the northern end. There are approximately 55 contributing and 34 non-contributing resources and several parking lots of varying sizes. Most of these buildings are of masonry construction with brick, stone or stucco exterior surfaces. Large windows are prominent as a result of so many buildings being used for automobile display. Most resources fit into the familiar category of Commercial Style buildings seen in many urban developments from the early-to-mid twentieth century. Among the non-contributing resources there is a mixture of modern infill, which generally matches the size and massing of the historic resources, as well as historic resources with modern facades. Many of these non-contributing historic resources likely have historic facades beneath the modern additions. There are also notable examples of Art Deco, International, and Moderne style resources. The district is bounded to the south by Brambleton Avenue and the Downtown Norfolk Historic District. To the east by St. Paul's Blvd, Monticello Avenue and the Young Terrace Public Housing neighborhood. To the north by 14th Street and to the west by Boush Street. The primary artery running up the middle of the district, and parallel to Monticello Avenue, is Granby Street.

There is minimal vegetation with some landscaping incorporated with infill construction. There are sidewalks along most streets. The overall character of the district is defined by the low commercial buildings, usually constructed to the lot line. Several buildings along or near Brambleton Avenue are the tallest and represent a transition from the downtown high rise development to the former auto showrooms and service warehouses of the auto row district. The district is anchored on the east by the large former Golden Triangle Hotel which was the first major hotel constructed in fifty years in Norfolk and the first full service hotel outside of the traditional downtown area.

Within the Auto Row Historic District are several notable buildings. Maybe the most prominent resource, and a rare four story building within the district, is the Virginian-Pilot Building (#122-0849) constructed 1936-37. This large limestone building is an important example of the stripped classical mode seen in the Philadelphia work of Paul P. Cret and also features several c 1950s additions to the rear. Another large and striking building is the former Center Auditorium and Arena, now the Harrison Opera House (#122-0121), constructed 1941-43. This massive limestone building has elements of the International and Streamline Moderne Styles and was a combination of an auditorium on one side (now the modern opera house façade) and an arena entered through the opposite side with that façade facing Granby Street and still completely intact. This building was transformational for the architecture of the city as the first large scale modern commission. This was the primary entertainment venue for the city from its construction until the building of Chrysler Hall and Scope in the 1970s and demonstrates how the Granby Street corridor and district had become the commercial focus of the city by the mid-twentieth century. Decidedly the most visible resource, as well as controversial, is the former Golden Triangle Motor Hotel built 1960-61. Designed by well-known Virginia and Washington, DC architect Anthony F. Musolino, this was the first major hotel built in the city since the early part of the twentieth century and also the first high end hotel built outside of the traditional

downtown area. This demonstrated that even by the 1960s the Granby Street corridor remained a commercial focus for the city.

Possibly the best remaining and most impressive car dealership building remaining is the three-story former Trant Motor Co. (#122-0881) constructed in 1924 with a 1950 addition. This building still features two stories of large historic windows and was designed by the prolific regional firm of Neff & Thompson. Another notable building is the former J. Gilbert Grubb Motor Co. Chevrolet dealership (#122-0852) constructed in 1923 and designed by Peebles & Ferguson. The building retains much of its historic character and features and housed several car dealerships through the 1960s. The Texaco Building (#122-0853) was constructed 1917-18 early in the building boom and is another prominent building related to the overall transportation industry as the district office for the company. The Bell Motor Co. (#122-1183) was constructed in 1916 as a Chevrolet dealership and the two storefront building retains much of its historic character.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

The Granby Street Auto Row Historic District is located directly north of the Downtown Norfolk Historic District (#122-0265) with Brambleton Avenue dividing them. The district consists of entirely commercial, mostly one-to-two story buildings with a handful of three and four story buildings. The area was developed in the nineteenth century almost entirely as working class housing. With denser, high rise development emerging in downtown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century business owners, including a large number of automobile sales and service companies, expanded north where there was access to larger lots to build showrooms and warehouses. By the mid-twentieth century all of the dwellings had been demolished, or altered beyond recognition, in favor of this new commercial development trend. While there have been some alterations to the street patterns, the primary corridor of Granby and many of the smaller cross streets remains the same as when they were laid out for the earlier residential development. Today the district represents the continued commercial development of this section of Norfolk with new buildings following for the most part the size and massing of earlier commercial buildings. The existing historic resources date from the early twentieth century until well into the second half of the twentieth century and demonstrate a variety of styles including Art Deco, Moderne, International, and various forms of mainstream Commercial Style buildings.

During the development of the Auto Row area of Norfolk dozens of buildings were constructed for the purpose of either selling or servicing automobiles. An extraordinary example of this is that fact that every parcel in the 700 block of Granby Street at one time or another contained a building related to the auto industry. These businesses included dealerships, repairs shops, part suppliers and even small light industrial manufacturers all supporting the huge expansion of the automobile industry at this time in Norfolk, and across the United States.

An April 15, 1911 article in the "Building News and Review" section of *The Ledger-Dispatch* described real estate speculators buying up significant sections of the land around the thoroughfares of Granby, Queen (now Brambleton), and James (now Monticello) at the mere rumor that the city might be constructing a public building in the area. A mere three years later a May 16, 1914 article appeared in *The Ledger-Dispatch* entitled "Granby Street Has Grown in Marvelous Manner." This article traces the rapid evolution of Granby Street into the main corridor out of downtown and, via side streets, to the primary residential areas of the city. By the time of this article it was accepted as fact that "retail growth of the city was to be in the direction of Granby Street." Initial hesitation by investors was solved when, two years earlier, the city extended Olney Road to Granby Street thus linking the Granby commercial corridor to the popular neighborhoods of Ghent, Colonial Place, Park Place, Larchmont, Edgewater, and Lochhaven. This resulted in "so called ultra conservative investors" paying what would have recently "been called 'Fancy' prices for their Granby street holdings." An assessment of land value at this time stated that "the point of highest values is at present on Granby street in the vicinity of City Hall avenue, and it is certain that this point will continue to move northward." The city supported these efforts by contributing half of the funds to transform Granby Street from Queen (Brambleton) to 15th Street into a "White Way." This entailed replacing the irregular wood power poles with uniform concrete replacements, installing street lights, and the creation of "new granolithic sidewalks on both sides of Granby street from Queen to Smith's Creek, from curb to building line..." Less than two years later another article entitled "Many Buildings Being Erected" appeared in the December 26, 1915 *Virginian-Pilot*. The article described construction expanding in much of the city and highlighted several large projects in the Granby Street corridor focusing on the new Olney Road extension as the primary driving force in that area. Only a little more than three years later an April 5, 1919 article in the *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* announced "Great Development of Olney Road, West of Granby, Soon to Be Under Way." This article describes more than \$250,000 of construction with multiple car dealerships included: a huge building and warehouse for the sale and service of cars by Arthur W. Depue; a new building for the Bell Motor Co.; a new building for the Ford Vulcanizing Company. There were also three modern stores two-to-three stories

tall added to the business district. These, along with the already constructed Texaco building at the corner of Granby and Olney, filled in the entire block west of Granby Street.

This level of building continued for years as the city grew until the Granby Street corridor was a dense and thriving commercial district. Almost all of these buildings were of brick masonry construction with some later examples built with concrete block usually covered by brick or stucco veneer. Many of the still extant buildings from this time feature first floors with numerous large windows for display and smaller windows on second stories. The roofs are almost entirely flat or sloped to the rear with brick cornices and brick or terra cotta coping on the sides. Most of the historic buildings in the district are architect designed and include nearly all of the well-known local and regional figures in the field including: Peebles & Ferguson; Neff & Thompson; Ferguson, Calrow & Wrenn; Anthony F. Musolino; Clarence W. Meakin; Benjamin F. Mitchell; John Arch Simpson; Mitchell & Wilcox.

The Auto Row Historic District is eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Transportation) for its very strong link to the automobile industry including the sale and service of automobiles, the production of repair parts, and the location of the district office of the Texaco oil company. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion A (Communication) as the home to the leading local newspaper headquarters and the location of a major local television and radio company housed in its purpose built 1950s headquarters. It is also eligible under Criterion A (Performing Arts) as home to the most important, and still extant, entertainment venue in the city for thirty years. Finally, it is eligible under Criterion A (Architecture) as a good example of a largely intact early-to-mid-twentieth century commercial district with good examples of several important twentieth century architectural styles.

Works Consulted

Building Permits (various). The Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, VA.

Norfolk City Directories (various). The Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, VA.

Parramore, Thomas C, Peter C. Stewart, Tommy L. Bogger. *Norfolk, The First Four Centuries*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (various). The Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, VA.

The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch (various).

The Virginian Pilot (various).

Wells, John E. Dalton and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects: 1835-1955*. Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

Wilson, Richard Guy & Contributors. Buildings of Virginia, Tidewater and Piedmont. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Sponsor (Individual and/or organization, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Luna Development Services, LLC		
	(Name)		
2601 Granby Street	Norfolk	VA	23517
(Address)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)
mike@lunadevelopment-llc.com		757-416-5862	
(Email Address)		(Daytime telephone including area code)	

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Michael E. Glenn

Daytime Telephone: (757) 416-5862

Applicant Information (Individual completing form)

Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/>	Marcus R Pollard			Commonwealth Preservation
Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/>				Group
	(Name)			(Firm)
PO Box 11083	Norfolk	VA	23517	
(Address)	(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	
marcus@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com		757-651-0494		
(Email Address)		(Daytime telephone including area code)		

Applicant's Signature:

Date: 10/10/2013

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. <input type="checkbox"/>	Marcus D Jones			City Manager
Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Hon. <input type="checkbox"/>				(Position)
City of Norfolk	1101 City Hall Building, 810 Union Street			
(Locality)	(Address)			
Norfolk	VA	23510	757-664-4242	
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)	

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

Several buildings within the proposed district are being considered for potential rehabilitation projects.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes ☐ No ☒

Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes ☐ No ☒